

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE UPDATE

MAY 24, 2002

The states of Arizona, North Carolina, and Iowa have banned the importation of cervids into their state.

An additional infected deer has been confirmed for northern Sioux County, Nebraska. This was a female whitetail deer taken by agency personnel on the Gilbert-Baker Wildlife Management Area. The location is 11 miles from the Edwards facility in Sioux County. This brings the total of CWD positive animals in Nebraska's wild deer population to 15.

A joint hearing of the House Subcommittees on Forests and Forest Health and Wildlife and Oceans was held in Washington, D. C. on May 16th. Nebraska Game and Parks presented testimony as well as several other states and federal agencies. Congressman McNinnis of Colorado and Congressman Kind of Wisconsin have introduced separate bills to provide funding to states for the CWD effort. Senators Allred and Campbell of Colorado have introduced a companion bill in the Senate.

The U. S. Senate has passed a supplemental appropriations bill that provides \$21,000,000 to the states for CWD efforts. This legislation now has to go to conference committee to reconcile it with the House version, which provided only \$18,000,000.

The U. S. Department of Interior and the U. S. Department of Agriculture have formed a joint committee to develop a unified federal plan for combating CWD. Co-chairs of this committee are Steve Williams, Director of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Bobby Acord, Administrator of the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service. They have also formed six working groups under this task force. The working groups will address research, surveillance, communication/information dissemination, diagnostics, regulatory issues, and disease management. There will be state wildlife agency representation on the committee and working groups.

Staff from the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies will be meeting with Steve Williams and Bobby Acord to discuss state participation in the joint committee efforts.

The National Park Service has contracted with South Dakota State University to conduct a PhD level study of cervids at Wind Cave National Park and CWD. The study will key in on determining if CWD is present in park animals and if environmental contamination is present. The park is next door to a previously infected facility and the park is in the process of purchasing that facility to increase the land base of Wind Cave.

State and Federal agriculture officials have finished depopulating 19 elk ranches in northeast Colorado to prevent future outbreaks of chronic wasting disease. A total of 1,338 elk were killed and incinerated during the last two weeks as part of a voluntary federal buyout of ranches in the endemic area. There are only two elk ranchers that choose not to participate in the program. This leaves only those two facilities with captive cervids in Colorado's endemic area. Nebraska

elk producers in the panhandle region have requested that the State Department of Agriculture and the USDA give them the same option of depopulation with indemnification for the Nebraska endemic area.